



Patient & Family Guide
2017

Stereotactic Radiation Therapy to the Brain



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Stereotactic Radiation Therapy to the Brain

Your doctor has talked about stereotactic radiation therapy with you. Stereotactic radiation therapy allows high dose radiation beams to be focused on a small area.

Your radiation therapy team includes radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiation therapists, and oncology nurses. The information in this pamphlet supports the teaching you will get from your team.

How does stereotactic radiation therapy work?

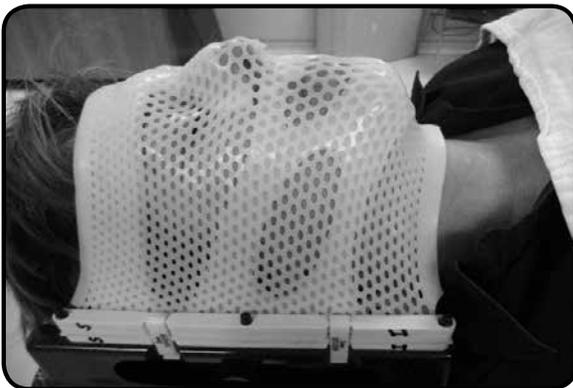
Stereotactic radiation therapy uses radiation to shrink or control the growth of abnormal cells or tumours. The radiation may kill the cells directly or stop the cells from growing.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

How do I get ready for my treatment?

- At your first appointment, you will have a mask made and have a CT scan. The mask is made first and takes about an hour.
- The mask is made from a mesh plastic. When placed in warm water, the plastic gets very warm and soft. This lets us mould the mask around the back of your head and your face.
- The mask has many small holes so you can breathe easily.
- After your mask is made, you will have a special CT scan done at the Cancer Centre. This CT scan is called “simulation”. It is used to plan your treatment.
- You will wear your mask for the simulation CT scan.
- The CT scan only takes a few minutes. It is important that you lie still. You will not get an injection for this CT scan.
- You may need to have an MRI done soon after your CT simulation.



What happens during my treatment?

- You will be given a specific time to come for your treatment.
- The therapists will call you into the radiation treatment room. You will be asked to lie on the treatment bed.
- To limit any movement of your head, you will need to wear your mask. The therapists will make you comfortable using knee pillows and blankets.
- The therapists will then position you and the machine so the radiation treatment can be given accurately. It is important that you stay still and breathe normally.



- Once you are in the right position, the therapists will leave the room. The treatment is controlled from outside the room. You will be alone in the room during your treatment,

but the therapists will be able to see and hear you at all times. The therapists can use an intercom to talk to you. They can stop the treatment and enter the room at any time if needed.

- You will not feel anything during the treatment, but you may hear the machine working. The machine will move around you to treat you, but it will never touch you.
- The therapists may come into the room at times during the treatment to reposition the machine.
- The treatment is given from different positions so you may feel the treatment bed move.
- The actual treatment time is about 5 minutes. You will be in the treatment room for 30 minutes or longer, depending on the time it takes to position you.

How many treatments will I need?

- The number of treatments may vary from person to person. A member of your healthcare team will let you know how many treatments you will need.
- Treatments are given Monday to Friday, but may start or finish on any day of the week.

What happens after my treatments are finished?

- Close to the end of your treatments, your treatment team will review any important instructions with you.
- The side effects from your treatment may continue for a period of time even though your treatment has finished. Continue with the instructions you received until any side effects go away.
- You will get a follow-up appointment. This appointment may include tests such as a CT scan or an MRI.

What if I am only having one treatment?

- Come to the radiation treatment department one hour before your planned treatment time.
- Your oncology nurse will talk with you and give you some medications to take before your treatment.
- After your treatment, you will need to stay for one hour so that your oncology nurse and radiation oncologist can make sure you are well enough to go home.
- You should not drive after your treatment. Make sure someone comes with you to take you home.

If you have any questions, please call the
Nova Scotia Cancer Centre Patient Message
Line at 902-473-6067.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

Nova Scotia Health Authority

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Prepared by: Radiation Therapy Services ©

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

CG85-1500 Updated January 2017

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.